

A N

Epistle to Friends, <sup>15</sup>

Concerning the PRESENT and SUCCEEDING

T I M E S.

B E I N G

A Faithful Exhortation and Warning to all Friends, who profess the Truth, to beware of the manifold Wiles of the Enemy, and to stand Armed in the Light of the Lord God of Heaven and Earth, against his Assaults, that so they may be ready to answer the Call and Requirings of the Lord.

A L S O,

Some thing signified of the Misery of the Succeeding Times, that all may be prepared, and that the Evil Day may not overtake any at unawares, but such as turn away their Ear from Counsel.

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*Let him that hath an Ear, hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches.*

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By one who is a Traveller in the Way of Peace, and hath good will towards all Men, and more especially to the Household of Faith,

STEPHEN CRISP.

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London, Printed in the Year, 1666.

## Epistle to Richard

Concerning the state of the Church

## TIME

Some time ago I received from you a letter containing a list of names of persons who were members of the Church of England in the year 1700. I have been much interested in this list, and have been thinking much of the state of the Church at that time. I have been thinking much of the state of the Church at that time. I have been thinking much of the state of the Church at that time.

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A N

# Epistle to Friends,

Concerning the PRESENT and SUCCEEDING

# T I M E S.

*Dear Friends,*

**Y**OU whom the Lord hath reached unto in this the day of his Love, and hath made known the way of Truth and Righteousness unto you, through the raising up of that holy, living Witness of himself, that long lay hid and buried in you, and hath brought you to a secret feeling of something in you, that is worth the minding and regarding; and the Lord causing this to appear in the day of your seeking, as a Light, discovering Darkness, and its power, by which ye were formerly holden, and given you, by his Spirit, a sense and secret hope, that in this Light, the way of Deliverance was to be attained unto; this *hope* made you not ashamed of the *light* which before you hated, but you came to own & embrace it, even while others still hated it, and you for its sake; yet your hearts being affected with the hope that did appear therein, could not but so far joyn unto it, as to make publick profession of it for its own sake; and for no other ends or designs, or interest at all, but with resolution in that Light, to wait for the Salvation of God. Dear Friends, it is you afore-mentioned that both now, and for some dayes and weeks, my heart hath been deeply exercised concerning, even night and day; and the aboundings of the Fathers love doth often overcome me, and draws me forth now to say and write these things unto you for your admonition and establishment; and indeed it is you who did thus rightly own the Way of Truth, and knew your believing to be the *gift* and *mercy* of God to your souls, that I do aim at; for those that have taken up the profession of the precious Truth upon by respects and sinister ends, and but for reasons propound-

ed in their carnal minds ; though I do pity them yet I have not much at this time to say to them, but this, *The day shall declare them, and their garments shall not hide them.*

But you, Oh my Friends, who had fellowship with us, in the deep travels of our beginnings, and did come to Truth the same way, and have known the power and virtue of it, many times overcoming you in your inward man, which hath made you cry out, *Lord evermore give us of this Bread* ; and hath made you as a Watred Garden : Oh Friends, how shall I express or signifie unto you those longings, those ardent desires and earnest breathings of my Soul, that you, even you, might abide to the end of all Tryals, and Tribulation, and Adversities ; and might inherit that Crown of Immortality, that is in Christ Jesus our Lord, and might not by any means be bereft thereof ; this is singly my travel in Body and Spirit, that you might be kept and preserved out of all the subtile snares of the wicked one, which hunts for the Soul, even of those that have believed ; And therefore in dear and tender love, I have a few things to write unto you for the clearing of my Conscience, and discharging my duty in the sight of the Lord ; and the Lord give you all a tender and an understanding heart, that both you and I may yet have cause daily to praise the Lord in the Glorious Light of his Salvation, which he hath manifested amongst us, by the revealing his Son Jesus Christ, to whom belongs *Dominion, Honour and Glory for ever, Amen.*

And first, dear Friends, it is in my heart to put you in remembrance of that by which we were called and convinced, which as a foundation Principle was laid in and among you, and it being unchangeable and unalterable in itself, doth therefore admit of no alteration or change in those that are rightly kept to it.

It was a Light which arose in our hearts, and shined forth from God, the Father of Lights, carrying in its appearance the nature and property of God, both in its condemning evil, which the Enemy had sown or planted in us ; and owning, allowing, and justifying every thing that was good and honest, just and equal ; even those thoughts in our hearts which were of turning towards the Lord, and seeking his righteousness ; these thoughts were justified and encouraged by the Light, and all the contrary discovered and judged, as they were brought to it to be tryed. Now this Light did our Souls rejoyce in, as they had good cause, though it took away our former rejoycings ; our pleasures in vanities and iniquity died, our glory in this world withered, our friendship with the Sons of men decayed, and we stood in the Light, and saw all these things, and were not sorry at it, but waited daily to



see these things more and more brought to pass, neither was there a permitting our thoughts to go out, how we might prevent those damages, or repair these losses, but the Cross of Christ was indeed our glorying or rejoicing; and the hope that was before us, did make us despise the pleasures, treasures and honours, friendship and delights of this world; and in those dayes you grew into a feeling of the Heavenly Joy, where the hundred-fold was witnessed in your Bosoms, and the zeal of the Lord was kindled by his own Spirit in you, against whatsoever this Light of Jesus in the Conscience did witness against; and the Lord beheld your integrity, and blessed you, and multiplyed you, and added to your strength and stature, and then did the fruits of this glorious work abound among you, in three more general and special effects; by which effects, or by their continuance among you, let all now come to search and try themselves, that so, dear Friends, those that have continued faithful in them all, may persevere in like manner to the end: and those, who upon true search do find, that they have failed, and fallen short in all or any of them, may make haste to repent, and to turn to that which was the root of them all, that they may not be found, as fruitless and withered branches, in the day that cometh, lest they be cut off and utterly consumed and blotted out from among the living Branches of the Vine; for a day cometh that Truth will look into the Fig-Tree for Fruit, and Leaves will not defend it from the Curse and Blasting.

The three especial fruits that did spring forth from this blessed root; and were and are to continue, and increase in us, and amongst us to the end, are these.

1. *Purity*, manifested in a godly Conversation.
2. *Unity*, manifested in dear and tender Love one towards another.
3. *Faithfulness*, manifested in bearing a constant and faithful Testimony to the things we had received and believed, though it were unto great loss and sufferings.

And against all these doth the wicked one appear to see if he can make you barren concerning them, and that with divers wiles and subtilties, that he may prevail on you, and not be known to be the Enemy, but might so overcome you, as that you might both submit to him, and then plead for him and his snares and wiles, as being just, right, lawful, prudent, convenient, &c. But, Oh dear Friends, let all be watchful and diligent to wait in the sence and true feeling of that Seed that never fell nor was beguiled; and you will (even the least of you) see and comprehend his workings and transformings, and be delivered from them.

1. *Purity and Holiness* was a fruit in you which doth yet flourish in many (*blessed be the Lord*) who are as watchful and careful to approve themselves in obedience to the Light of Truth in their inward parts, as ever; & finds as great a necessity both of trying & judging with its judgment as ever; these having thus waited, have renewed their strength unto this very day, and do mount up as upon the Wings of an Eagle; these are neither weary in running, nor faint they in their walking; But alas, Friends, even these do know with how great and manifold assaults they have been assaulted, and know and see with sorrow of heart how the assault hath prevailed upon some, by working into the mind a secret Liberty, and supposed enlargedness, whereby a carelessness hath entered some, and they having no-keeper, but the measure of Light revealed in their hearts and consciences, so soon as they came to be persuaded to slight the reproofs of that, they soon erred; and this supposed Liberty entered, that now, after so many years strictness and circumspection, they should not need now to stand so straitly to try things and words as at first, because now, a day of more Liberty was come; and this Liberty secretly prevailed against that pure fear that once was placed in their hearts, and against the very obedience of Truth, inwardly in the subjection of the mind, and then it became manifest outwardly; the actions sometimes blame-worthy, the words and speech again corrupted, and run into the old channel of the World, like them again, and the single pure Language, learned in the Light, in the time of their poverty and simplicity, almost lost and forgotten, and so the work of God which he wrought, in a manner laid waste; and then, when this Liberty is entred, and made use of as aforesaid, oftentimes a secret subtilty ariseth against the judgment of Truth, either from within, or from any outwardly, that are grieved with this loose and careless kind of speaking or acting, which subtilly leads to contend for it, or against the judgment, telling the Creature, why these things are but small things, and little things, and what we must not strain at, a Gnar, and such like. Oh my Friends, beware of these evil suggestions of the wicked One; How came they to be small and little things, seeing they were great things with us in the beginning? And how comes an offence of this nature to be light now, seeing it was heavy in the beginning? Oh let not the greatest Mercies of our God so fill us, as to make us slight or forget the least obedience; but rather let the continuance of his mercy the more quicken you up unto a Zeal for his Name and Truth in all things, to be found doing and speaking according to the Rule of Righteousness, which ye learned in the Light, in the day of your being low and little, and then nothing will rise up and be exalted in the multitude

lude of Gods mercies, but that holy birth which lives in purity when it is at highest; and so that life of Righteousness will shine forth more and more, which glorifies God and seeks his honour. Dear Friends, that ye might be so kept unto the end, in the breathing and travel of my soul: and that where this neglect hath entred, and this aforesaid corruption either in speech or action is to be found, that ye would receive the Word of Exhortation in meekness and fear, in which it is written unto you, and may redeem the time, for the dayes are and shall be evil; and none will hold the mystery of the Faith (that saves from falling in the evil day) but such as do keep the pure and undefiled Conscience, which none can do but by persisting and continuing in the daily sanctification of the Spirit, and belief and obedience of the Truth.

A second Fruit that was brought forth from this good Root, was *Unity and Love* one towards another; which, blessed be the Lord, is preciouslly preserved in and among many to this very day: who are so sensible of the divers operations of Truth in them, to be all by one Spirit, that they are still kept of one heart and mind, given up freely to serve the Lord in singleness of heart in their generation; and are in this good work as strengtheners and encouragers of one another; but notwithstanding the enemy hath been exceeding busie to lay waste and destroy this blessed effect also, and that under divers pretences, which the Lord still discovered by his own Light and Spirit in his People, who have singly waited upon him; but many have been his wiles, sometimes sitting and preparing vessels to rise up in the fleshly and sensual wisdom, & to traduce & bring in corrupt and evil doctrines, to try who were not sound in the Faith; that they may draw them aside into a heat and zeal for something which had not its root in the Truth, and which they that abode in the Truth could not own, but judge and condemn in the Name of the Lord; which when such saw, they took thereat occasion of striving to propagate and promote that which they saw withstood; so having lost subjection to the Spirit of Truth in themselves, which would have kept them in Unity in the Body; and having also lost and laid by their subjection to them that were over them in the Lord, they then grew stubborn and wilful, and proceeded in more zeal for that which stood in opposition to the Truth, than ever they did for the Truth it self; and these sometimes have prevailed to the subverting whole households, and have turned several from the Faith and simplicity that is in the Gospel, who, as well as those that subverted them, have lost the fellowship of the Saints, and the savour of Life either in themselves or others; and then the Enemy perswaded them, all are dead to the Life but themselves; and so they grow to have a tickling joy.

joy in what they do and say, in obedience to that perverse and singular private Spirit, and so grow up to speak evil of Dignities, and are unruly, and dare to speak against Heaven, and them that dwell and inhabit in it, whom God makes to shine as Stars in the Firmament of his Power; but alas for them, my Soul pities them, when I see how they sport themselves with their own deceivings, but the Day of the Lord is among his People, which hath and doth make them and their Spirit manifest, and their fruits also have made them manifest.

Another way that the Enemy seeks to break the Unity, and dissolve the bond of Amity, is, by sowing a seed of Jealousie and prejudice in the hearts of such in whom he can get an entrance, that so they may cease from the true and unfeigned love, and that upon a pretended reason, because of this or that, which is supposed or imagined, in the evil part in themselves against others; giving heed to evil thoughts and surmises, which break forth many times in whisperings and tale-bearing; which though the thing supposed to be evil, were really so, Yet this is not to be allowed or given way to among you, but to use plainness one towards another, and single-heartedness; and to shut out the evil one in this his subtle appearance also. Oh dear Friends, remember how the Lord hath dealt with you, and deal you so one by another; he hath not sought occasions against you, but hath long-borne and suffered, and exercised much patience and tenderness towards you; yet plainly reproving the evil in you, and not treasuring it up against you. Oh Friends, be like-minded one towards another, that the Enemy of your peace and concord may be defeated, and you preserved entire to one Head, even to Christ Jesus; and ye may be one, and the Name of the Lord may be one among you; and that which tends to the making cold your Love, may be judged in all; and so Brotherly-Love will continue with you to the end.

Another way which the Enemy works to scatter and to bring from this Unity, is, by leading some who have believed, into some sin and iniquity, which the Body that are in the Truth, are constrained to appear in judgment against for the Truths sake; and yet notwithstanding the party so sinning, being above the Witness in themselves, which would bring them to own the judgement of the Spirit of Christ in his Church, they exalt themselves above the judgment, and seek to gain to them, such whom they can enter by their words and complaints to rake part with them against the judgment and those that passed it. Such were those whose words *did eat* (the Apostle said) *as a Canker*; of whom the Believers in those days were to be aware; for commonly such as have gone from the Power, *that should have kept them clean and upright,*  
they

they will also turn against the power in those that abide in it, especially if they be drawn forth to reprove & rebuke them: but let all such know, that's not the way to be renewed; and let all that take part with any that work iniquity, know, that they do but defile their own souls thereby, and do but rend themselves from that Body, which they cannot prosper out of. And therefore, dear Friends, beware of joyning with that in your selves or in others, which the Power goeth against, let the pretences be what it will; for that which doth evil, will alwayes be aptest to sow evil complainings of others; and such as are in the unsatisfied murmurings against judgement passed upon them, are much to be feared, for they thereby render themselves to be the more guilty, and yet the further from repentance. But, dear Friends, watch unto that which gives you a living feeling of the living Body, which is the Church, that in all things you may demean your selves as true Members of it, serving one another in Love, and submitting your selves one unto another for the Lords sake: That in all plainness and singleness, as becometh the Truth, you may seek to preserve the Unity which the Enemy of Truth and Peace doth envy: so shall ye continue to strengthen one anothers hands in every good work, and this shall tend to the weakening of the hands of your Enemies, who seek to divide you, that they might rule over you. Many other designs doth the wicked One try, daily to break and divide, more then can now be named or here inserted; but they are all out of the Light, and if you be in it, you will see them, and that will preserve you: for its one, and did make us one, and will keep us to be of one heart and mind to the end, if we abide in it.

3. The third good effect which Truth did work in the beginning in them who did truly receive it, was *Zeal and Faithfulness* to God in the bearing testimony to what was manifest, though through great sufferings; in which, as Friends abide in the Root, they do daily increase in power, to fulfill the same Testimony: for the Mercy of the Lord doth engage them; and his answer of peace, in the midst of their tryals, doth arm them and encourage them, and they do hold out to the end; and for such the Lord hath alwayes made a way, better than they could have made for themselves. Yet the Enemy hath in this matter also been very busie, & hath prevailed with some under divers considerations, or rather consultations, which he hath propounded unto them. But, oh Friends, be ye all watchful, and take heed lest any of the testimonies of Truth be laid waste; for that which leads to be weary of bearing witness to the Truth, and to lay it waste, the same will lay thee waste, and bring thee into such a state, as thou wilt want the Truth

to bear witness for thee; and though it be hard for flesh and blood (which hath no kingdom but here) to fall into the hands of unreasonable men; yet it is a more fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; and therefore let all luke-warm-ones, who are neither hot nor cold, be now awakened, and all that have gone backwards be warned to return to their First Love, else the Lord will come against them, and the day hastens that will divide such their portion among hypocrites, except they repent.

But to touch at some of the Reasons or Arguments, which he that abode not in the Truth himself, useth to draw others into this kind of treacherous backsliding:

*First,* He appears to some to perswade them, That their former testimony was born more from an imitation of others, than from a work of the power of God in themselves; and that now, they not finding the thing required of them, they may leave of their testimonies, or may do such things as they have denied formerly; this snare doth the Enemy make use of in these days. But mark who it is that he hath caught with it; none but such who sometimes were low in their minds, and dare not grieve the Spirit of God in themselves, nor others, but for the Truths sake could give up all things rather than their Testimony; but in time growing careless, and loose in waiting, lost that subject state, and grew high and exalted in their minds, above the Cross that should have crucified the betraying wisdom; and so having lost the true exercise of the power, and the feeling of the excellency and worth of the Truth, they knew not the requirings of the Lord; and the earthly mind got up, that placed a greater esteem upon earthly things, then upon things that are Eternal; and so things that once thou offeredst up to God, thou takest again into thine own hand, and so robbest the Lord, and growest careful about outward things, as other Gentiles are; and to cover thy shame therein, the Enemy then tempts thee to bely the power that once wrought in thy heart, and made thee afraid to act against the Light, or to deny the Testimony for God in such things as was manifest, and then saist, thou didst it by imitation; but thou shalt know thy covering is too narrow in the day that hasteth upon thee.

Another Temptation that the Enemy presenteth, is, that though thou art convinced what to do, or what thou shouldest deny, yet the tryals are so hard and so many, and Persecutors wax worse and worse, so that thou shalt not hold out to the end; and where he can get entrance with this bait, he presently causeth an evil heart of unbelief and doubting to arise, which takes away even the strength which the Lord did



give, and so feebleness doth enter the mind, and a spirit of bondage leads thee to fear again; and then comes the dispute in thy heart whether thou shalt stand with the power of God in the Obedience, or whether thou shalt fall under that power that ariseth against God, and his Truth and People; and in this Combate thou hast a subtle Enemy, using many devices to betray thee; and a part in thy self, not yet mortified, that is ready to say, *Pitty thy self, pitty thy Wife, pitty thy Children, and pitty thy Relations*; which it may be sometimes, are all as so many Instruments of Satan to seduce thee, and lead thee into darkness, that thou mayst not see so great necessity in thy bearing up thy Testimony as indeed there is, nor so great a danger in the contrary as indeed there is.

On Friends, at such a time as this, where is there any help but in the Lord? Where canst thou find a Saviour but in that Light which gives to distinguish of the several Voices? Now it is good for thee to remember that *if thou walk after the flesh, thou must and shalt surely die, and wither*. In such a time flee, flee to the Lord, wait in his dread to feel thy strength but renewed at the present, and take no care for strength next month, next year, or next trial; for *God is God, and change-eth not, and will be the same to thee in seven tryals as in six, if thou believe and wait on him in uprightness*; and therefore fear not man, but trust in the Lord all ye that have known and felt his power, and let not in the Enemy of your souls by the door of *carnal reasoning*, but keep that shut; and rather consider, how the Enemy makes thee as a rejoicing among his own Children, and strengthens that hope in them of their overcoming all others, as well as thee; which hope is curst, and shall be confounded: And consider that if thou lettest fall thy Testimony, which thou hast once born for the Lord, thou makest the heart of the righteous sad, and makest their travel through that Testimony the harder for them, by reason of thy encouraging their Adversaries by the hope aforesaid. And whatever thou dost, *they must go thorow to the end, who will inherit the Crown of Immortality*.

And again consider, It may be that thy back-sliding, or cowardly drawing away the shoulder, may prove a discouragement to others, and they may stumble in thy stumbling, and fall with thee, and never be able to rise, and so thou bring their blood also upon thee. Oh remember also, that Servant of the Lord, who could say, *Psal. 119. 157. My Persecutors are increased, but my heart doth not decline thy Testimonies*. That was a noble Spirit becoming the Souldiers of Christ: yea, though persecuted by Princes, as he saith, *vers. 161.*

Dear Friends, Let your minds be stirred up to be zealous for the Lord, in this the great day of Controversie with darkness and its power. Who hath God to bear witness to his Name but you? Among whom hath he made it known as among you? Who have given up themselves to the Lord as you have done? Well, *Blessed are they that keep Covenant with the Lord, for they shall see his glory.*

One more subtle snare of the Enemy in this matter, is in my heart to mention, that is this, *Viz.* To perswade thee for once, sometimes to do that which the Light hath made manifest, with a purpose afterward to be more faithful. Oh Friends, In the Name and Fear of the Lord, I exhort and warn you all to take heed of this, for this will prove but a false confidence, thou wilt find this kind of going out of the guidance of Truth, to be a dear out-going to thee; for if ever thou dost return, it will be very hardly, and with bitter anguish of Soul. Oh do not tempt the Lord on this wise, *Left it doth prove impossible, upon thy sinning willingly, to renew or restore thee again by Repentance*; thou wilt have thy *Portage*, but wilt lose the *Blessing*, though thou mayest seek it with tears; for while thou wentest out, behold, thy way became hedged up, and the *Thorny-Nature* gat up in thee, and so thou art debarred and fenced out from enjoying thy former state; Sin being entered, Death soon follows. Oh remember *Sampson*, who when he had disclosed the token of a *Nazarite*, in which state he stood in Covenant with God; yet thought to have shaken himself, and to have gone forth in his strength as at other times, but was mistaken, *Judg. 16. 20. for the Lord was departed from him, though he knew it not.* And so, though thou hast known the Lords presence and power in thy Vessel, yet take heed of letting in that treacherous spirit, to lead thee to unfaithfulness, and to betray the least of his Trusts and Testimonies committed to thee, thought it be but for once, for thereby thou wilt render thy self unworthy to be found a Witness of his Power another time; for the Lord will leave that Vessel, and often doth, and chooseth other Vessels to manifest himself in, that will be more true and faithful.

So, dear Friends, in true and tender Love I have laid these things before you, that ye might all be stirred up and provoked to Love, and to good Works, that ye might abound in the grace committed to you; and none of you who have known the Truth, might be entangled with the Wiles of your subtle enemy; and that you that have begun well, might not lose the things that ye have wrought, but might persevere in well-doing till ye have finished your course in peace. And Friends, this is the joy and delight of those that labour among you in the Lord,

and



and hereby is our hand strengthened, and our hearts refreshed, when we do find ye such as we desire ye should be, even stedfast in the Truth; and then also do you find us to you-ward, such as ye desire we should be, even a refreshing in the fellowship of life unto you, and our God comforts us together, in the mutual joy and comfort of his holy Spirit, working in us and you.

And Friends, I am the more drawn forth at this time to visit you with an Epistle, because the Lord hath given me some sight of his great and dreadful Day, and Workings in it which is at hand, and greatly hastens, of which I have something to say unto you, that ye may be prepared to stand in his day, and may behold his wondrous Working among his Enemies, and have fellowship with his Power therein, and may not be dismayed nor driven away in the tempest, which will be great.

And as concerning those succeeding times, the Spirit of the Lord hath signified that they will be times of horror and amazement, to all that have, and yet do reject his Counsel: for as the dayes of his forbearance, warning and inviting, have been long, so shall his appearance, amongst those that have withstood him, be fierce and terrible; even so terrible, as who shall abide his coming? for the Lord will work both secretly and openly, and his Arm shall be manifest to his Children in both.

Secretly he shall raise up a continual fretting anguish amongst his Enemies, one against another, so that being vexed and tormented inwardly, they shall seek to make each other miserable, and delight therein for a little season; and then the Prevailer must be prevailed over, and the digger of the Pit must fall therein; and the confidence that men have had one in another shall fail, and they will beguile and betray one another, both by counsel and strength; and as they have banded themselves to break you, whom God hath gathered, so shall they band themselves against one another, to break, to spoil, and destroy one another; and thorow the multitude

tude of their treacheries, all credit or belief, upon the account of their solemn engagement, shall fail; so that few men shall count themselves, or what is theirs, safe in the hand of his Friend, who hath not chosen his safety and friendship in the pure Light of the unchangable Truth of God; and all the secret counsels of the ungodly shall be brought to nought, sometimes by the means of some of themselves, and sometimes by impossibilities lying in their way, which shall make their hearts fail of ever accomplishing what they have determined; and in this state shall men fret themselves for a season, and shall not be able to see the hand that turns against them, but shall turn to fight against one thing, and another, & a third thing, and shall stagger, and reel in Counsel and Judgment, as drunken men that know not where to find the way to rest; and when they do yet stir themselves up against the holy People, and against the holy Covenant of Light, and them that walk in it, they shall but the more be confounded; for they shall be helped with a little help, which all the ungodly shall not hinder them of, to wit, the secret Arm of the Lord, maintaining their Cause, and raising up a Witness in the very hearts of their Adversaries to plead their Innocency;

*Isa. 8.* and this shall make them yet the more to vex themselves, and to go thorow, hard-bested; for when they shall look upward to their Religion, to their Power, Policy, or Preferments, or Friendships, or whatsoever else they had trusted in, and relied upon, they shall have cause to curse it; and when they look downwards to the Effects produced by all those things, behold, then trouble, and horrow, and vexation takes hold on them, and drives them to darkness; and having no help but what is Earthly, and being out of the knowledge of the mighty overturning Power of the Lord God Almighty, they shall despair and wear out their dayes with anguish; and besides all this, the terrible hand of the Lord is, and shall be openly manifest against this ungodly

Generation, by bringing grievous and terrible Judgments and Plagues upon them, tumbling down all things in which their Pride and Glory stood, and overturning, overturning, even the Foundations of their strength; yea, the Lord will lay waste the Mountain of the ungodly, and the strength of the fenced City shall fail, and when men shall say, We will take refuge

*Nahum. 3.*

12, 13.

in them, they shall become but a Snare, and there shall the Sword devour; and when they shall say, *We will go into the Field, and put trust in the Number and Courage of our Souldiers,* they shall both be taken away; and this evil also will come of the Lord, and his Hand will be stretched out still, and shall bring Confusion upon Confusion, Ruine upon Ruine, and War upon War; and the hearts of men shall be stirred in them, and the Nations shall be as Waters, into which a Tempest, a swift Whirlwind is entered, and even as Waves, swell up to the dissolution one of another, and breaking one of another, so shall the swellings of People be: And because of the hardship and sorrow of those days, many shall seek and desire Death rather than Life.

Ah my heart relents and is moved within me in the sense of these things, and much more than I can Write or Declare, which the Lord will do in the Earth, and will also make haste to accomplish among the Sons of Men, that they may know and confess, *That the Most High doth Rule in the Kingdoms of Men, and pulleth down and setteth up according to his own Will; And this shall men do before seven times pass over them, and shall be content to give their glory unto him that sits in Heaven.*

But, Oh Friends, while all these things are working, and bringing to pass, repose ye your selves in the Munition of that Rock, that all these shakings shall not move, even in the knowledge and feeling of the eternal Power of God, keeping you subjectly given up to his Heavenly Will; and feel it daily to

kill

kill and mortifie that which remains in any of you, which is of this World; for the worldly part in any, is the changeable part, and that is up and down, full and empty, joyfull and sorrowfull, as things go well or ill in the World: For as the Truth is but one, and many are made partakers of its Spirit; so the World is but one, and many are partakers of the spirit of it: and so many as do partake of it, so many will be straitned and perplexed with it; but they who are single to the Truth, waiting daily to feel the Life and Virtue of it in their hearts, these shall rejoyce in the midst of Adversity; these shall not have their hearts moved with fear, nor tossed with anguish because of evil tydings, *Psal.* 112. 7, 8. Because that which fixeth them remains with them: These shall know their enterance with the Bridegroom, and so be kept from sorrow, though his coming be with a noise; and when a midnight is come upon mans glory, yet they being ready and prepared, it will be well with them; and having a true sence of the Power working in themselves, they cannot but have Unity and Fellowship with the works of it in the Earth, and will not at all murmur against what is, nor wish nor will what is not to be; these will be at rest till the Indignation passeth over, and these, having no Design to carry on, nor no Party to promote in the Earth, cannot possibly be defeated nor disappointed in their undertakings.

2 And when you see Divisions, and Parties, and Rendings in the Bowels of Nations, and Rumors and Tempests in the Minds of People, then take heed of being moved to this party or to that party, or giving your strength to this or that, or counselling this way or that way; but stand single to the Truth of God, in which neither War, Rent nor Division is; and take heed of that part in any of you, which trusts and relies upon any sort of the Men of this World, in the day of their Prosperity; for the same part will bring you to suffer with them in the time of their Adversity, which will not be

be long after; for Stability in that ground there will be none, but when they shall say, *Come joyne with us in this or that*, remember you are joyned to the Lord by his pure Spirit, to walk with him in Peace and in Righteousness, and you feeling this, this gathers out of all Bussings, and Noises, and Parties, and Tumults; and leads you to exalt the Standard of truth and Righteousness, in an innocent Conversation, to see who will flow unto that; and this shall be a refuge for many of the weary, tossed and afflicted ones, in those dayes, and a Shelter for many whose day is not yet over.

So, Dearly beloved Friends and Brethren, who have believed and known the blessed appearance of the Truth, let not your hearts be troubled at none of these things; oh let not the things that are at present, nor things that are yet to come, move you from stedfastness, but rather double your Diligence, Zeal and Faithfulness to the Cause of God: for they that know the Work wrought in themselves, they shall rest in the day of trouble, *Yea, though the Fig-tree fail, and the Vine brings not forth, and the labour of the Olive-tree ceaseth, and the Fields yeeld no meat; and Sheep be cut off from the Fold, and there be no Bullock in the Stall? Yet then mayest thou rejoyce in the Lord, and sing praises to the God of thy Salvation.*

And how near these dayes are to this poor Nation, few knows; and therefore the Cry of the Lord is very loud unto its Inhabitans, through his Servants and Messengers, that they would prize their time while they have it lest they be overturned, wasted and laid desolaté before they are aware; and before destruction come upon them, and there be no remedy, as it hath already done upon many.

Oh *LONDON, LONDON*, {that thou and thy Rulers would have considered, hearkened and heard, in the Day of thy Warnings and Invitations, and not have persisted in thy Rebellion, till the Lord was moved against thee, to cut off the Thousands, and Multitudes from thy Streets, and the pressing and throngings of People from thy Gates, and then to destroy and ruine thy Streets also, and lay desolate thy Gates, when thou thoughtest to have replenished them again.

And, Oh saith my soul, that thy Inhabitate would yet be warned and perswaded to Repent and Turn to the Lord, by putting away every one the evil that is in their hearts, against the Truth in your selves, and against those that walk in it ; before a greater Desolation and Destruction overtake you.

Oh what shall I say to prevail with *London*, and with its Inhabitants ! The Lord hath Called aloud, he hath Roared out of *Zion* unto them, but many of them have not hearkened at all, nor considered at all.

Well, Oh my friends, (and thou, oh my Soul) return to your rest, dwell in the Pavillion of the House of your God, and my God, and shelter your selves under the shadow of his Wings, where ye shall be Witnesses of his Doings, and see his *STRANG ACT* brought to pass, and shall not be hurt therewith, nor dismayed.

Oh my Friends, in the bowels of dear and tender Love have I signified these things unto you, that ye might stand Armed with the whole Armor of God, Cloathed in Righteousness

eusness, and your Feet shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace : and freely given up in all things, to the disposing of the Lord, who will deliver us, not by Might, nor by Sword, nor spear, but by his own eternal invisible Arm, will he yet save us and deliver us, and get himself a Name by preserving of us ; and we shall yet live to praise him, who is worthy of Glory, of Honour and Renown, from the rising of the Sun, to the setting of the same, now and for ever, *Amen, Amen*, saith my soul.

## A Post-script.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

**I** Have something farther in my heart to communicate unto you, in dear and tender Love, and in desire of your preservation out of the Snares of your Adversary ; And that is, to exhort you all to dwell in the pure Judgement of the Truth, which is a defence upon your Glory ; and let none bereave you of this under any pretence whatsoever, but as you come to a true feeling of the Life in your selves, to which alone the certain Judgement appertaineth ; So let this Life have freedom, and stop it not from judging all that which is at enmity with the Life, and tends to the hurting the true Plant of God, for I have seen a harm bath come to many who bath par-



## A Post-script.

ted with their Judgment, and so have become unarmed, and the Enemy hath prevailed upon them, (under a pretended tenderness) to permit or suffer such things as were hurtful to themselves or others; and though the Lord had given them Judgment and discerning in the matter, yet were bereaved of that gift, and so by little and little became beguiled.

Oh dear Friends! consider these dayes are perillous times, and it is needful for every one to watch in that same Eternal Light to which you were first turned, that by its Righteous Judgement ye may be preserved from every thing in your selves that appears contrary to that precious Life of which you have tasted; And when you have so done, then to take heed that the Enemy do not do that by an Instrument which (through your watchfulness in the Light) he could not do without; and all beware of that affected tenderness, that cries out, Be tender to all, and pray for all, and mind the good in all, and love all, and judge none, but leave Judgement to God, &c. I say, Heed not the plausible words of that Spirit, which being guilty, to save its own head from a stroke, would bereave you of your Judgement which God hath given you; and is indeed truly his Judgement, and is to be Administred in his Wisdom and Power, for the cleansing and keeping clean his Sanctuary; for such as haue no judgment in their goings, are they that knows not the true way of Peace, but makes them crooked Paths, he that goeth in them shall not know Peace, I sa.  
59. 8.

But some may say, Was not Christ meek and lowly? and ought not all to be like unto him?

'Tis true my Friends, but there is a difference between the Seeds Suffering and its Reigning, and there is times for them both; and when it doth please God to permit the Hour and  
power



## A Post-script.

Power of *Darkness* in the open Persecutors, to exalt it self against his Seed and People, by Persecution, or such like; they are led by his Spirit to appear in Meekness and Quietness, as a Sheep before the Sheerer. But what is this to suffering bad and perverse Spirits, that appears under pretence of the Truth, and yet are out of the Truth, and Enemies to its prosperity, striving to exalt and set up another thing instead of the Truth? Such as these the Lord doth not require you to use onely Patience and Meekness towards; but if that will not reclaim them, they must know the Judgement of the Truth, and you in it must stand over them; for in this case, the day of the exaltation of Christ is come, and God is Crowning Truth with Dominion over every false Spirit, and corrupt practice thereof.

And therefore dear Friends, eye the Lord in his goings forth, and as you feel his Life in you to witness against any evil and corrupt thing or practice, use plainness, and keep sincerity, and turn not judgement backward; for that which is unwilling to be judged, and cries out, Judge none, leave all to God, &c. the same will take upon it both to judge and rule, but not in the Wisdom of God; and those that cry out so much for Tenderness, and against Truths Judgement, the same are most dangerous to be drawn out from the patient suffering in the Spirit of Christ Jesus, when they ought to appear in the most Meekness, and to appear rough and wrathful in the striving and fighting Nature; and are most apt to be tempted into a Spirit of Revenge, as hath been seen by sad experience; for they that loose the exercise of that by which all should keep Dominion over deceit, they loose that strength by which they should be enabled to suffer all things for the sake of Christ Jesus.

So dear Friends, in that which keeps out the Defiler and the Betrayer, all wait upon the Lord, that you may have your Ar-

mour

### A Post-Script.

*mour on, and be fortified with the Strength, with the Might and with the Judgements of God, and keep that under in every place, which under pretence of tenderueſs and forbearance, would make void the Testimony of Truth, or make the offence of the Croſs to ceaſe in any thing wherein you have been instructed from the beginning, that the Lord may behold and ſee judgement eſtabliſhed, and be pleaſed, Iſa. 59. The Lord looked, and there was no Judgement, and it diſpleaſed him; For thereby deceit got up, which with it is to be kept down.*

So the Lord God of Power and Wiſdom preſerve you faithful, and fitted for every good Word and Work; the Strong to watch over the Weak, in ſingleness; and the Weak to be ſubject to the Strong in the Lord, that ſo the pure Plant of Righteouſneſs and Truth may grow in and among you all, to his Praise that hath called you: To whom be Glory and Honour for ever, *Amen.*

S. C.

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FINIS.

